

Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 14.631

be equivalent to an executed power of attorney.

(2) If the claimant so consents, an attorney associated or affiliated with the claimant's attorney of record or employed by the same legal services office as the attorney of record may assist in representation and may have access to the claimant's records in the same manner as the attorney of record.

(3) Legal interns, law students, and paralegals may not be independently accredited to represent claimants under this paragraph. (See § 14.630; see also § 19.156).

(4) Unless revoked by the claimant, consent provided under paragraph (c)(2) of this section or § 14.631(c)(iii) shall remain effective in the event the claimant's original attorney is replaced as attorney of record by another member of the same law firm or an attorney employed by the same legal services office.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900-0018)

[53 FR 52421, Dec. 28, 1988, as amended at 55 FR 38057, Sept. 17, 1990]

§ 14.630 Authorization for a particular claim.

Any person may be authorized to prepare, present, and prosecute a particular claim. A proper power of attorney, and a statement signed by the person and the claimant that no compensation will be charged or paid for the services, shall be filed with the office where the claim is presented. A signed writing, which may be in letter form, identifying the claimant and the type of benefit or relief sought, specifically authorizing a named individual to act as the claimant's representative, and further authorizing direct access to records pertinent to the claim, will be accepted as a power of attorney. A person accredited under this section shall represent only one claimant; however, in unusual circumstances, appeal of such limitation may be made to the General Counsel.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5903)

[53 FR 52421, Dec. 28, 1988]

§ 14.631 Powers of attorney.

(a) A power of attorney, executed on either Department of Veterans Affairs

Form 23-22 (Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative) or Department of Veterans Affairs Form 2-22a (Appointment of Attorney or Agent as Claimant's Representative), is required to represent a claimant, except when representation is by an attorney who complies with § 14.629(c) or when representation by an individual is authorized under § 14.630. The power of attorney shall meet the following requirements:

(1) Contain signature by:

(i) The claimant, or

(ii) The claimant's guardian, or

(iii) In the case of an incompetent, minor, or otherwise incapacitated person without a guardian, the following in the order named—spouse, parent, other relative or friend (if interests are not adverse), or the director of the hospital in which the claimant is maintained; and

(2) Shall be presented to the appropriate Department of Veterans Affairs office for filing in the veteran's claims folder.

(b) Questions concerning powers of attorney shall be referred to the Regional Counsel of jurisdiction for initial determination. This determination may be appealed to the General Counsel.

(c)(1) Only one organization, agent, or attorney will be recognized at one time in the prosecution of a particular claim. Except as provided in § 14.629(c) and paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(3) of this section, all transactions concerning the claim will be conducted exclusively with the recognized organization, agent, or attorney of record until notice of a change, if any, is received by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) An organization named in a power of attorney executed in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section may employ an attorney to represent a claimant in a particular claim. Unless the attorney is an accredited representative of the organization, the written consent of the claimant shall be required.

(3) Legal interns, law students, and paralegals may assist in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim under the direct supervision of a claimant's attorney of record designated under § 14.629(c), or an attorney

who is either employed by or an accredited representative of an organization named in a power of attorney executed in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section. However, prior to their participation, the claimant's written consent must be furnished to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such consent must specifically state that a legal intern, law student, or paralegal furnishing written authorization from the attorney of record or the organization named in the power of attorney may have access to the claimant's records and that such person's participation in all aspects of the claim is authorized. The supervising attorney, or an attorney authorized under § 14.629(c)(2), must be present at any hearing in which a legal intern, law student, or paralegal participates.

(d) A power of attorney may be revoked at any time, and an attorney may be discharged at any time. Unless a claimant specifically indicates otherwise, the receipt of a new power of attorney shall constitute a revocation of an existing power of attorney. If an attorney submits a letter of representation under § 14.629 regarding a particular claim, or a claimant authorizes a person to provide representation in a particular claim under § 14.630, such specific authority shall constitute a revocation of an existing general power of attorney filed under paragraph (a) of this section only as it pertains to, and during the pendency of, that particular claim. Following the final determination of such claim, the general power of attorney shall remain in effect as to any new or reopened claim.

(e) The authority which a power of attorney provides may be continued for a reasonable time after the death of the claimant, to determine whether the claim will be continued by a new claimant and whether a new power of attorney will be executed.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5902, 5903, 5904)

[43 FR 46535—46537, Oct. 10, 1978, as amended at 53 FR 52421, Dec. 28, 1988]

§ 14.632 Letters of accreditation.

If challenged, the qualifications of prospective representatives or agents shall be verified by the Regional Counsel of jurisdiction. The report of the

Regional Counsel, if any, including any recommendation of the Department of Veterans Affairs facility director, and the application shall be transmitted to the General Counsel for final action. If the designee is disapproved by the General Counsel, the reasons will be stated and an opportunity will be given to submit additional information. If the designee is approved, letters of accreditation, or an identification card, will be issued by the General Counsel or the General Counsel's designee and will constitute authority to prepare, present, and prosecute claims in all Department of Veterans Affairs installations. Letters of accreditation to former employees of the Federal Government will advise such individuals of the restrictions and penalties concerning post-employment conflict of interest provided in title 18, United States Code. Record of accreditation will be maintained in the Office of the General Counsel.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5902, 5904).

[53 FR 52422, Dec. 28, 1988]

§ 14.633 Termination of accreditation of agents, attorneys, and representatives.

(a) Accreditation may be canceled at the request of an agent, attorney, representative, or organization.

(b) Accreditation shall be canceled at such time a determination is made that any requirement of § 14.629 is no longer met by an agent, attorney, or representative.

(c) Accreditation shall be canceled when the General Counsel finds, by clear and convincing evidence, one of the following:

(1) Violation of or refusal to comply with the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or with the regulations governing practice before the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) Knowingly presenting or prosecuting a fraudulent claim against the United States, or knowingly providing false information to the United States;

(3) Demanding or accepting unlawful compensation for preparing, presenting, prosecuting, or advising or consulting, concerning a claim;